



**FACULTY OF MUSIC
UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA MALAYSIA**

**MUSIC PREFERENCE
AMONG
MUSIC DEGREE STUDENTS IN UITM**

**EDU650
ACADEMIC PROJECT**

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**Bachelor Degree in Music Education (Hons)
MU220**

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate musical styles as a function of preference, specifically popular music and Western classical music among undergraduate music education, performance and composition students in local university in Klang Valley. Subject were 60 undergraduate student of which there were 20 music education students from parts one to eight, and 20 each students from parts one six for music performance and composition students. The questionnaires were distributed stratified sampling to student who agreed to participate in the study. This study measured preference by using an instrument that consisted of 20 musical examples representing the generic styles of classical and current popular music. The current popular music was selected from music charts such as the Top 10. Subjects indicate preference on a 7-point Likert-type scale.

Result showed that, there is a significant difference between both genders. Findings also showed that females have a high preference rating for both of the musical style rather than males. Results also showed that there are significant differences between music education, music composition and music performance students. Music performance programme showed the highest mean compare the other programme for pop music and classical music.

Background of the Study

Anywhere, in homes, offices, cars, restaurants, and clubs around the world, people are listening to music. Giving students an opportunity to listen and respond to great musical works may help them develop an appreciation for music. Finnas (1989) defined music preference as affective reaction to a piece of music or to a certain style of music that reflect the degree of liking or disliking for that music. The usual way of determining preference for certain music has been to ask participants to estimate the pleasantness of the music or their own liking of the music (p.2-3).

Music is very popular in modern life. For each major music category, it could be further divided into some small classes due to different periods or different music style. Jiang, Lu, Zhang, Tao, and Cai (2000) used a classification system for classical music and popular music. Classical music is classified into baroque music and romantic music, which correspond to the baroque era and romantic era in western music history respectively.

During the Renaissance Period, the music culture experienced tremendous growth. More music was composed than in any previous era. Composers began to produce music intended for aesthetic fulfillment as well as practicality. Renaissance music was conceived in parts, and emphasis was placed on pleasing combinations of sound. For the first time music employed the entire chromatic scale, a full range of voices, and instruments in several independent forms, and vocal text expanded from Latin and poetry to all forms of literature. Vocal forms that flourished during the Renaissance Period include the madrigal, aria, chanson, and Lutheran chorale. The style and performance of instrumental music was similar to vocal music, but independent forms were developed including the canzona, variation, toccatta, fugue, and suite. During the Renaissance Period a great number and variety of instruments were used. Ensembles were generally arranged in groups of like instruments to achieve uniform timbre. In

Renaissance music, the melody is supreme, and all musical material comes from the inspiration of the melody. Basically, the change was from a linear or horizontal texture (polyphony) to a vertical texture (homophony). The thoroughbass technique (fingered bass or continuo), as it was called, employed a kind of musical shorthand. The composer wrote a melody line and a bass line with numbers below the pitches of the bass line. These numbers would tell the performer what harmonies were intended by the composer, and the performer could fill in the harmonies himself. The composers began writing as much and as often for instruments as they did for voices. The great music of the Renaissance is all vocal music. Because of many reasons, instruments began to rival the voice in amount and quality of repertory.

The Baroque music style was thought of as too complex and dramatic. Musical Style Baroque period is decorative in its use of trills and other forms of musical ornamentation; it is dramatic in its operas, oratorios, and cantatas; it is flamboyant in its attention to the virtuosity of the soloist; and it is emotional in that moods are musically expressed (sorrow would have a slow-moving, drowsy melody broken with many sighs and happiness would be a fast-moving melody, probably in a major key). Rhythm in Baroque music takes on major importance. Music of this period has a strong feeling of forward motion. Dynamic and expressive markings were practically unknown in Baroque music. Dynamic ranges were controlled by the number of players or singers performing at one time. Small groups were contrasted with large groups to produce an effect of softer and louder light and shade (concertato style). The move from the Renaissance to the Baroque brought about an important change in the texture of music.

Classical composers thought music should be light, elegant and entertaining – accessible to all. Complex counterpoint of Bach now dissolved into more homophonic writing and melody-and-accompaniment. More of a balance of textures was seen, with clarity foremost. There was a move away from sacred to secular composing. The single mood or emotion portrayed in each piece of Baroque music was overthrown with the invention of sonata and rondo form, where 2 or 3 ideas (called motifs) were contrasted and opposed to each other in one piece, enabling new expressions. Symphonies grew from 3 movements to 4, including movement 1 in sonata form.

Melodies had short, balanced phrases in Classical music (usually 4-bar phrases), and are based on scales and notes from triads. The Alberti bass was popular and there are clear major and minor keys and cadences. Pieces have a strong, regular pulse and rhythms are simple and even.

The string quartet was developed by Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, and as virtuoso music grew the classical Concerto evolved. The orchestra grew, the all-important string section now accompanied by a self-contained Woodwind section, 4 French horns, 2 trumpets and timpani. The clarinet and harp also started to be included, and the piano developed in sound to be a more powerful solo instrument. Subsequently, as the harpsichord fell out of use, the Cellos and Double basses developed more independent lines (as seen in *Non Piu Andrai* by Mozart).

20th century music style refers to tone color more important than ever before. The 20th century music style including the percussive sounds used more frequently, uncommon playing techniques become normal, instruments are played in extreme high and low registers, percussion instruments are numerous and prominent, unusual groupings of instruments in ensembles, less emphasis on blended sound, sharply contrasting tone colors, new chord structures, polychords, tone cluster, alternatives to traditional tonal

system, bitonality, polytonality, atonality (12-tone system), rhythmic vocabulary of music expanded emphasis on irregularity and unpredictability, jazz rhythms, influences from non-western cultures, syncopation, changing meters & odd meters (groups of 5, 7, etc.), polyrhythms, ostinato – use of repeated rhythmic and melodic patterns to help unify a work. Melodies often contain wide pitch leaps and are difficult to sing. Use of new and different scales: 12-tone, pentatonic, whole-tone, and church modes.

Popular music is further classified into three types, which include pop songs, jazz, and rock. There are many music characteristics could be used to discriminate different music type, such as the musical structure, tempo, rhythm, melody, chord, and so on. It is tempting to confuse pop music with popular music. The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, the musicologist's ultimate reference resource, identifies popular music as the music since industrialization in the 1800's that is most in line with the tastes and interests of the urban middle class. This would include an extremely wide range of music from vaudeville and minstrel shows to heavy metal. Pop music, on the other hand, has primarily come into usage to describe music that evolved out of the rock 'n roll revolution of the mid-1950's and continues in a definable path to today.

Rubin et al., (2001) say that "people select music for particular reasons and are personally involved with their favorite types of music on physical and cognitive levels". This research provided the question by each selecting a particular genre of popular music and classical music, and then researched the music style of musical preferences among undergraduate students.

Statement of problem

Generally, learning music in a university in the Klang Valley is more to classical music. Interest in student selection of music is in accordance with the development of music and perhaps more prefer to pop music rather than classical music. Selection of music among students affects the interests of the learned music style.

Gender affects the music preference. As stated in a series of studies (LeBlanc, 1979, 1981; LeBlanc & Cote, 1983, LeBlanc & McCrary 1983) designed to test and refine a theory of the acquisition of music listening preferences, evidence has repeatedly emerged to suggest that the gender have some effect on that person's music listening preference. This evidence has never been strong in the case of gender. Reimer (1965) wrote that "women have broader musical taste than men" (p.151) after a review of research, and O'Neil (1997) wrote "there are striking gender differences in boys' and girls' preferences for music" (p.50).

Music preferences among Bachelor of Music Education programme, Bachelor of Music Performance programme and Bachelor of Music Composition programmed maybe influence by the subject offered. There are programmes that offer the subject is more to classical music such as music education programme learn more about classical music but it doesn't mean that they like what they learn. Referring to the music education program book, most subjects they learn are based on classical music. It may be affected the musical preference.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to investigate musical styles as a function of preference, specifically popular music and Western classical music among undergraduate music education, performance and composition students.

Research question

1. Which music style is preferred by the respective gender?
2. What music style that music degree students prefer to?

Significance of the study

This research is apparently one of the ways to investigate music preference among the undergraduate music students. Therefore, this study may provide some useful information to both students and lecturers. The lecturer can use different types of method in teaching musical styles to their students.

Scope of the study

The sample for this study consist of students in the music faculty of a university in the Klang Valley who are enrolled in the Bachelor of Music Education program, Bachelor in Music Composition program, and Bachelor in Music Performance program. Therefore the results may be easily generalized to music students of other universities.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

What is music preference?

Finnas (1989) defined music preference as affective reaction to a piece of music or to a certain style of music that reflect the degree of liking or disliking for that music. The usual way of determining preference for certain music has been to ask participants to estimate the pleasantness of the music or their own liking of the music (p.2-3).

Music preference seems vital in order to understand music and its meaning that holds to the individual listener. Giving students an opportunity to listen and respond to great musical works may help them develop an appreciation for music they will carry into their lives beyond music class (Rappaport, 2005). Szabo (2005) found out that exposing children to many styles and genres of music will effect their informal learning environment.

Some researchers found that our peers exert a stronger influence on development of musical preferences. The notion of our peers exerting an influence on our musical preference is also supported by Zillmann and Gan (1997). Lewis (1992 cited in Russell, 1997, p. 151) argues that music is used as a means to identify with people we like or people we wish to identify with. This means that music becomes a tool with which we develop and reinforce our group membership. This argument is supported by Bakaginnis and Tarrant (2006), who state that many studies have ascertained that musical preference makes an important contribution to the establishment and maintenance of social identity by offering individuals a basis for social comparison and self-evaluation.